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ABSTRACT

This module is designed to help prospective school counselors expand their understanding of group process, examine their own attitudes and behaviors in groups, and learn components for facilitating small group process with self/career development themes. The module begins with a short review of research on effective counselors and a brief discussion of the necessary conditions for facilitating small groups. The following modules are included: (1) small group process: reviewing the counselor's beliefs and the facilitative conditions (including an article on establishing a healthy psychological learning climate); (2) image recall: tracing attitudes toward, and behaviors in groups; (3) self-assessment: focusing on small group behavior (including Louis Thayer's Self Assessment Inventory); (4) the small group: becoming aware of interactions and the process; and (5) career help groups: facilitating foundations. References are included. (TE)

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SELF/CAREER DEVELOPMENT: FACILITATING SMALL GROUP PROCESS

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**SCHOOL COUNSELOR EDUCATION PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT GRANT
(1989-1990)**

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Note of Appreciation

I wish to express my appreciation to the following people who have shared group process and career development resources with me, talked with me about the module, and/or encouraged me to develop this module. My appreciation is given to Ms. Catherine Leggieri, Ms. Jeanne Thayer, and Dr. John W. Waidley. A special thanks for your assistance.

Lou Thayer
EMU - 1990

SELF/CAREER DEVELOPMENT: FACILITATING SMALL GROUP PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

The goal of this module is to help prospective school counselors expand their understanding of group process, examine their own attitudes and behaviors in groups, and learn components for facilitating small group process with self/career development themes. It is an active, experiential process for prospective school counselors. An emphasis will be placed on the prospective counselors' development of attitudes and behaviors in groups and how their strengths in groups may be utilized in the facilitation of small group process. The focus of these activities will be the self/career development of learners/students.

Since school counselors have opportunities to facilitate student learning/self development groups, there is a need for prospective counselors to study what personal counselor beliefs and strengths are effective, what conditions facilitate small group process and self/career development, what to look for in groups, and what to do to establish career development support groups. School learners need opportunities and time with adults and peers to understand their own actualizing process with a career path being one component of overall development. Learners need constructive situations and processes in order to explore their developmental issues as they relate to career and self. Schools cannot afford not to spend time with learners helping them understand their emerging issues as the issues relate to career opportunities, directions, and a changing world. And families often have a large impact on the directions that learners take. Learners need opportunities to understand the forces affecting them so that they may see their own strengths, interests, forces affecting them, peer influences, family influences, processes involved in actualizing the self, and ways to enhance development. The individual needs to be the focus in the small group process. By helping learners become more understanding, aware, and hopeful about the present and future, school counselors empower learners to explore their

processes, see their strengths, develop as persons, create their self/career directions, and gain confidence to meet an ever-changing society.

The module begins with a short review of research on effective counselors. The module facilitator will also discuss briefly the necessary conditions for facilitating small groups as well as highlight several basic group facilitation skills. These basic skills will be based on counseling skills that were learned earlier in the program of studies. As the module continues, prospective counselors will have opportunities to assess their own small group facilitation attitudes and skills. Prospective counselors will be encouraged to utilize their strengths in small group facilitation.

The prospective counselors will be asked to read two or three articles between the sessions. These cognitive articles will focus on things to look for in groups and the facilitative conditions. Then, the module facilitator reviews briefly several key group skills before involving the prospective counselors in a process for seeing and becoming more aware of group process components.

The final part of the module gives the prospective counselor a chance to hear several ideas about establishing self/career development learning groups. Finally, the module facilitator discusses additional resources for learning about group work. The prospective counselors are challenged and encouraged to become very effective in facilitating self/career development with small group work.

A. Small Group Process: Reviewing The Counselor's Beliefs and The Facilitative Conditions

This component of the module provides a mini-lecture by the facilitator. It helps prospective counselors look at their belief systems and consider the establishment of facilitative conditions for group process. The core conditions are also discussed in terms of the ways that they are reflected in behavior (skills). This component is primarily a review for prospective counselors and encourages them to get ready to look at their own development as small group facilitators.

Objectives

1. Participants will be provided with information concerning research on the relationship between the helper's belief system and effective counseling.
2. Participants will be provided with information on the core conditions for counseling and competencies for facilitation.
3. Participants will be involved in short simulated counseling practice sessions to review the competencies for facilitation and to receive feedback.

Process

- I. The module facilitator reviews the role that the counselor's belief system plays in helping relationships. A brief summary is provided on the Florida Studies in the Helping Professions by Combs (1969) and the results of fourteen studies of "the belief systems of good and poor practitioners in eight helping professions."

Here is a short excerpt from Combs' (1989, p. 98) latest book.

The Helper's Belief System

Each of these investigations examined the perceptions of helpers with respect to a number of perceptual dichotomies. Examples – Good helpers: are internally (perceptually) rather than externally (behaviorally) oriented; are people rather than thing oriented; see their clients as able rather than unable; see persons as dependable rather than undependable; see self positively rather than negatively; have broader rather than

narrower purposes; are self revealing rather than self concealing, etc.

The categories explored in these studies suggest at least four general areas of personal theory that seem to discriminate clearly between good and poor helpers:

1. Beliefs about the significant data. Good helpers are people-oriented. They seem to attend to internal personal meanings rather than to external behavioral data. This is another way of saying that they tune in to how things seem from the point of view of those with whom they work. In behavioral terms, they are sensitive or empathic.

2. Beliefs about people. The beliefs we hold about people determine the ways we behave toward them. If one does not believe that people are able, for example, one dares not act as though they are. Effective helpers hold more positive views about the people they work with. They see them as trustworthy, able, dependable, and so on.

3. Beliefs about the helper's self. Helpers, like everyone else, behave in terms of their self-concepts. These studies suggest the importance of positive views of self in the helper. Such feelings provide security for helper and client alike.

4. Beliefs about purposes or priorities. Effective helpers seem characterized by broader, larger purposes than ineffective practitioners.

- II. The facilitator discusses the implications of the research and what it means for prospective counselors and their professional development.
- III. The facilitator continues with a brief mini-lecture on the conditions for a healthy psychological learning climate for small group process. The facilitator reviews Rogers's (1965) three conditions necessary for establishing a helping process in groups. The facilitator will later assign Rogers's (1970) chapter "Can I Be a Facilitative Person in a Group?" for reading by the prospective counselors.

Thayer (1984, pp. 70-74) reviewed these qualities noted by C. Rogers and also described ten competencies for facilitation. They are provided in the following paragraphs.

Establishing a Healthy Psychological Learning Climate

The components of a facilitative learning process are critical. The facilitator is a significant person in this respect. She or he demonstrates qualities that may affect variables in the learning process – communication, respect for the learner, optimism about actualizing potentials, understanding of self and others, self-confidence as a facilitator, congruence as a person, belief and trust in the learner, etc.

The first quality and, perhaps, one of the most crucial is that of *congruence*. Other terms such as genuineness and realness have been used to describe this quality. Congruence means that the facilitator attempts to be whole in the learning relationship. What the facilitator is experiencing is present in his or her awareness and is available for communication. In essence, the facilitator is integrated, all in one piece. When the facilitator is congruent, she or he is *fully* present in the relationship and, in most ways, is transparent to the learner in terms of the here and now. The learners can also see into the heart of the facilitator. Actually, the facilitator moves away from playing roles or presenting a facade in the situation. The facilitator is viewed as a person with a certain set of competencies and knowledge – and as a learner, too. Although the responsibilities of facilitators and learners differ in some ways, both are viewed as persons with feelings, thoughts, ideas, loves, etc.

The second quality is *unconditional positive regard*. This quality is one which the facilitator experiences toward the learner. The facilitator has a deep respect and caring for the individual both as a learner and as a person. There is an acceptance of the person with all of her or his weaknesses, strengths, idiosyncrasies, and possibilities. Another word that is commonly used is that of "prizing" the learner. And there are no conditions attached to this caring. The facilitator experiences a tremendous respect for the dignity and integrity of each person. Will the facilitator like all of the behaviors of each learner? Perhaps not, but the respect is still present for the person.

The third quality is *empathic understanding*. This quality has received the most attention from the helping professions – teaching, counseling, health care, pastoral counseling, crisis center work, parenting, etc. It seems to be a quality that has been difficult for some people to develop. Empathy is being able to listen to what learners communicate, verbally and nonverbally; ~~for~~ understand the feelings, thoughts, and meanings; and then to put these understandings in one's own words and communicate these

understandings to the learner. When the learners perceive themselves as being heard and understood, they explore their inner worlds more deeply. The effective facilitator is not trying to tell learners the meanings of their worlds but she or he is attempting to "walk in their shoes" in order to understand the learners. The facilitator seeks to understand what their needs are, what their wants are, what their joys are, what their disappointments are, what their views of learning are, what their hates are, what their perceptions of the world are, what their concepts of themselves (self-concepts) are, what their sorrows are, what their directions in learning are, what their dreams are, and on and on. But is there time for this kind of understanding? The facilitator who seeks to help learners needs to set aside the time in order to know them. Persons develop with "person help." Enough time must be spent with learners.

Having a facilitative interpersonal relationship. When the three qualities or core conditions are met, a facilitative learning climate emerges that has at its core helping interpersonal relationships. Because the facilitator seeks to be congruent in the learning situation, to experience an unconditional positive regard for learners, and to demonstrate empathic understanding with learners, learners begin to emulate these qualities in learning relationships with the facilitator and with peers. The qualities are contagious. Now learners and the facilitator can move towards the development of their inner potentials in an environment that has caring, trust, congruence, communication, risk taking, feedback, cognition, and a lack of threat. Under these circumstances, the facilitator does not have to worry about the achievement or productivity of learners. They will learn cognitive content rapidly and achieve closer to what they are capable of achieving. The learners and the facilitator have made a commitment to themselves, to each other, and to learning. Learners become responsible because they have ownership in the process and have retrieved their responsibilities -- their own learning and development. It is a more holistic form of self-development which includes the affective, cognitive, and psychomotor domains. The process is alive, exciting, and challenging. Learners are, with the facilitator's aid, unlocking their inherent potentials to learn, to create new ideas and products, to achieve, to be resources for each other, and to be fully human in the process. It is an experience based on good interpersonal relationships.

Developing Competencies for Facilitation

The competencies to be developed are the core qualities reflected in behavior. The reflection of the qualities in behavior is a process movement of integration and congruence on the part of the facilitator. If the

facilitator has the qualities and experiences them internally, then the qualities need to be demonstrated in the daily interactive process with learners. These qualities are ones which facilitators hold for themselves. They are persons, too. The behavioral competencies to be worked on are reflections of these qualities: a goal of being congruent in interpersonal relationships in the learning setting; a sincere caring and acceptance of learners as persons; and, a willingness to listen and understand the feelings, perceptions, and realities of learners.

1. *Being attentive* signals one's intent or willingness to engage in communication with the other person. Attentiveness communicates a readiness on the facilitator's part to focus on the other person and what this person is saying and feeling. In essence, the facilitator is ready to pay attention to all that the person is experiencing and communicating. The facilitator's body reflects this intent to be attentive. Good eye contact is maintained, but the facilitator does not stare. The facilitator's physical posture is turned toward the person to show interest in what is being communicated. Furthermore, the facilitator generally allows the other person to select the topical content; communication is encouraged by helping the person talk about the topics that he or she has chosen. The focus is on the other person; the facilitator follows the person's expressions of thoughts, feelings, and meanings.

2. *Being relaxed* aids in attentiveness to the other person and to the process. The muscles in the facilitator's body should not be overly tense; such tenseness often indicates that other conditions or events, such as uneasiness about the current situation or personal concerns, are distracting the facilitator. Not being relaxed can affect the facilitator's ability to be focused on the other person. Taking several deep breaths helps in becoming more relaxed. Tensing the body muscles several times for five to seven seconds and then releasing the tightness also aids in relaxing the muscles.

3. *Sensing and communicating an understanding of thoughts* (verbal messages) means that the facilitator is able to hear the other person's message and to state in his or her own words what the person is saying. Such a statement communicates to the person what is heard and allows for an accuracy check by that person. The facilitator's communication helps to assure the person that someone is really trying to understand his or her ways of viewing life experiences. The intent is to follow the person's leads in order to understand the person and then, in turn, to communicate this understanding to the person. Questions are used infrequently since they often represent the facilitator's curiosity and desire to direct the process. Instead, the facilitator encourages the person to direct the

flow of communication because the person knows what the concern is. Practice helps in attempting to state accurately what the other person has just said.

4. *Sensing and communicating an understanding of feelings and meanings* (verbal and nonverbal messages) is an effort on the facilitator's part to grasp the other person's entire communication, both verbal and nonverbal, and then to let the other person hear what is understood of his or her feelings in relation to events and experiences. The facilitator listens carefully for feeling words and observes the simultaneous nonverbal messages in the voice and physical expressions. Responding to feelings and meanings is a key skill that can communicate understanding of the person's world to that person. Feelings are communicated in both verbal and nonverbal ways. The facilitator must be particularly sensitive to the nonverbal messages because they are not always the same as the verbal messages. A difference between the verbal and the nonverbal message may signal that the person is not completely aware of his or her experiencing; the person may be in a state of incongruence. Some research psychologists believe that over 65 percent of the feeling and meaning of a message is communicated nonverbally. This research indicates that the facilitator needs to be aware of facial expressions, voice tones, eye contact, hand gestures, body movements, and so forth. In addition to the skill training in responding to a person's feelings, thoughts, and meanings, the facilitator may practice helping another person talk when only nonverbal cues are exhibited.

5. *Being aware of personal (facilitator) experiencing and expressing related thoughts and feelings* is another area on which to work. The facilitator is encouraged to be in touch with his or her own thoughts and feelings concerning the current moment of experiencing. In other words, the facilitator tries to pay attention to his or her own inner self and any internal dialogue. He or she focuses inward to be aware of feelings and thoughts and then practices expressing these feelings and thoughts in "I" messages. Using "I" indicates that the facilitator owns these messages and is responsible for them. Expressing inner feelings and thoughts helps the facilitator become more honest and direct in interactions with others, more congruent as a person.

6. *Experiencing positive regard and appreciation for learners as persons and showing respect for others and for oneself* is reflective of an attitude of caring and concern for people. The facilitator is encouraged to take a moment to consider the feelings and thoughts of others as well as his or her own rights as a person in learning situations. In essence, the facilitator should attempt to demonstrate to the other person that "I prize you as a person and as a learner."

People will acknowledge care and concern for them. When respect for learners is shown, learners gain more self-respect and also view their own human potentials as worthwhile and as resources worth tapping.

7. *Trusting and expressing intuitive hunches* can often be more valuable than relying on intellect. The facilitator who remains open with all senses will, at one point or another, experience a very real "gut" sensation about the other person and what that person may be experiencing. Such a feeling may begin in the pit of the stomach and eventually flow over the entire body. This intuitive hunch, often perceived only minimally by the facilitator, can become a very accurate perception and a useful tool in the helping/learning process. The facilitator may wish to test the accuracy of intuitive hunches to be able to place more trust in them.

8. *Recognizing and responding to that personal material which is most conspicuous by its absence* is a competency of facilitation. Occasionally, learners will communicate an amount of information which reveals some component of feelings, thoughts, or information that is conspicuously absent. With sensitivity, the facilitator may choose to respond depending on what the missing component might be. Take, for example, a teenager who talked of sports, school, his mother, siblings, grades, and teachers. The component that seemed obviously missing was talk of his father. Upon responding to the absent information, the facilitator learned that the boy's father had died several months earlier and that it was difficult for the boy to accept his father's death. In this case, the situation was sensitive. The facilitator had to respond with care. But much can be learned by understanding what a learner is speaking about and what is conspicuously absent in the themes of communication.

9. *Paying attention to personal (facilitator) mental images* that are based upon stimulus statements and communication from the learner provides a rich source of data for understanding the world of the learner. At times, concurrent feelings and thoughts will be generated in the facilitator that bring him or her closer to the visual/perceptual world of a learner. In addition to understanding the learner, the facilitator can help the learner to develop imaginative ideas, explore fears and blocks to learning, project risks and consequences of desired actions, and others. Paralleling the visualizations from the eye of the learner's mind can make for greater empathic understanding and personal relevancy of learning. It is a doorway to unlock the creative process.

10. *Recognizing polarities and helping learners*
integrate these apparent splits is a challenge for facilitators. Perhaps, in terms of this chapter, the split of emotion and cognition is worthy of integration, not only within the learner, but also within the learning/education system as a whole. Often, in learning situations, cognitive or affective domains are dealt with separately when they belong together as one. Too often, learners have been caused to deny feelings and their relationship to the total process of learning. The facilitator has an exciting adventure ahead if he or she can help learners accept the polarities that exist, integrate the affective and cognitive aspects of learning, stop denying the affective part, and recognize that the result will be a whole, fuller process of learning, greater than the sum of the two parts.

- IV. At this point, the facilitator may spend time in practice review activities on the basic skills as they prepare for the small group focus. Small groups of four each may be used by designating two observers, a counselor, and client for the simulated counseling sessions. After each practice session, the counselor receives feedback.

B. Image Recall: Tracing Attitudes Toward and Behaviors in Groups

This component helps prospective counselors review their own development of attitudes toward and behavior in groups. While in a state of relaxation, prospective counselors are asked to visualize previous and present experiences which relate directly to the development of attitudes toward groups and behavior in groups. Participants will be asked to pay attention to as many of their group experiences as they can remember. Participants will be encouraged to gain a sense of their own developmental processes related to groups and to see how these attitudes and behaviors relate to their current practices in groups. After the visualizing process, the participants will have an opportunity to relate, examine, and discuss their image recall experiences with other participants. This experiential activity is from Thayer (1981, pp. 195-200).

Objectives

1. Participants will picture or develop an image in their minds of previous group experiences and situations.
2. Participants will examine the development of their attitudes and perceptions concerning groups and participation in groups.
3. Participants will explore present feelings, thoughts, and opinions about the value of encounter, social, and therapy groups.
4. Participants will be encouraged to develop empathy for those who participate in groups.

Process

The process for this component is expected to take from 60 to 90 minutes; however, the facilitator may change the emphasis in the process or use one of the variations.

- I. The facilitator asks each participant to sit in a comfortable part of the room in which she/he can be alone with her/his thoughts and feelings and free

from distractions. Each participant is informed that she/he will be taking a short trip into her/his past to focus on group experiences.

- II. The facilitator dims the lights, if possible, and asks the participants to close their eyes and to become physically relaxed. The participants are instructed to tighten all their body muscles lightly, to hold them in a tense position for several seconds, and then to relax them. This procedure of muscle tightening and release is repeated three or four times to ensure greater relaxation. The participants are also directed to breathe deeply several times and to continue deep breathing during the activity. The facilitator suggests that the participants let relaxation flow into their bodies and that they become progressively more and more relaxed.
- III. After the participants seem relaxed, they are told that they will be asked to form images of previous group situations in which they were participants or observers. The facilitator reads the following stimulus statements in a calm, soft spoken tone, pausing where indicated for approximately twenty seconds.

Part A:

1. Try to form an image or picture in your mind about the first group situation in which you participated. [Pause]
2. Who were the other people in the group? Was it a family group? Did you seem comfortable in the group? [Pause]
3. Now form an image of your early elementary school years. What do you picture concerning your participation in groups? Were you an active or a passive member of these groups? At this age, what was your relationship with adults? [Pause]
4. How did you feel and act in groups during the middle years of elementary school? What effects did males and/or females have on

your participation? Were you outgoing or shy? Did you follow what others did in group situations? [Pause]

5. Did you participate in strictly male or female groups then? In what group activities did you participate in school and outside of school? [Pause]
6. Did you participate in religious-group activities? What was your role in these groups? Had you adopted a particular mode of behavior in groups by the age of ten? If so, how would you describe your behavior? How would you describe your feelings? [Pause]
7. During your years in grades 7, 8, and 9, how did you react in group situations? What were your feelings when you were in groups? Did you participate in all-male or all-female groups? Were you in groups that included adult members? [Pause]
8. During this same period did others perceive you as a leader or as a follower in groups? How did you perceive your own role? [Pause]
9. Did your teachers, counselors, or parents ever talk with you about your involvement in groups? If they did, what were their comments? [Pause]
10. Were you ever ridiculed in a group situation? If so, what were the effects on you? [Pause]
11. Did you ever take stands on current, controversial issues? [Pause]

Part B:

1. During your high school years, how were you developing as a group member? Were you very perceptive about the behavior of others and about their roles in groups? Were you aware of your own behaviors and roles in groups? [Pause]

2. Did you ever participate in a counseling group during high school? Was your class participation active or passive? Did any adults encourage or discourage your group participation? Generally speaking, how did you feel in groups? [Pause]
3. What other group situations were you experiencing at this time in your life? Working? Religious activities? Social activities such as dating? Family activities? Had you developed any group leadership skills? If so, what were they? What were some of your weaknesses and strengths in groups? [Pause]
4. By the end of high school, did you like participating in groups? How did they help or hinder you? What were your feelings about them? Were you expressive in groups? [Pause]
5. Remember the experiences you have had in groups since leaving high school. Have you been in social groups with peers? Work groups? Close family groups? College-classroom groups? Discussion groups? Encounter groups? Task forces? Counseling or therapy groups? Sensitivity groups? Training groups? Seminar groups? [Pause]
6. Can you see how you behaved in groups? What impact did your behavior have on other group members? Did you avoid them? Were you a leader or a follower? What roles did you play? [Pause]
7. What feelings do you have about your participation in groups now? How do you perceive your current behavior? How do these perceptions compare with the perceptions that others have of you? What do you expect from others in groups? In what ways do others influence your behavior in group situations? [Pause]
8. How would you describe the joys you presently experience in groups? How would you describe your present fears in groups? [Pause]

9. For a few seconds try to form an image of the kind of person you would like to be in groups. [Pause]

Part C:

Remember when I asked you to make yourself comfortable? What reactions did you have? Focus on your responses as we took this short trip. Review all the thoughts and feelings you have about group behavior and groups.

Remember any physical sensations and related images that were in your awareness during this experience or over the years. How have your perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors in groups developed and changed? [Pause]

Part D:

1. Pay attention to all that is happening within your body and your mind. Think of some precise words that describe your thoughts and feelings concerning groups . . . participation in groups... the uses you make of groups ... the changes you wish to make. [Pause]
2. Now stretch your arms and legs, move your head around, and open your eyes.

If the lights were previously dimmed, at this point the facilitator increases the illumination in the room.

- IV. The participants are divided into subgroups of six each. The facilitator asks each subgroup to select a recorder; each recorder is given paper, a pencil or pen, and a clipboard or other portable writing surface and is asked to note interesting and significant points that arise during the ensuing subgroup discussion. Then the participants are encouraged to share some of their group experiences, noting both positive and negative aspects. They are also invited to look at the developmental themes inherent in the formulation of their current attitudes and behaviors in groups. (Twenty minutes.)

- V. After the participants have shared their past experiences, the facilitator requests that they summarize and discuss their current attitudes and how these attitudes are reflected in behavior in different groups. The following questions are posed. (Twenty minutes for the entire step.)
1. How would you like to behave in groups?
 2. Under what circumstances would you use groups to accomplish goals?
- VI. The total group is reconvened, and the recorders are asked to report the points that were brought out during the subgroup discussions. The participants are asked to listen to these reports, to mentally compare the report content with their own experiences, and to think about the developmental themes that are evident in their experiences. (Ten minutes.)
- VII. The facilitator continues the discussion with a focus on the uses and abuses of groups in different settings.

Variations

- I. The facilitator may lead the participants through an abbreviated form of systematic relaxation before the activity begins.
- II. In step III, the facilitator may select only Part A or Part B as the focus of the image-recall experience; however, Parts C and D should both be used as the final stimulus segments.
- III. Some of the stimulus questions and statements in step III may be used to structure a homework assignment. After completing the assignment, the participants are asked to compare and contrast their experiences with the principles published by experts on the subject of groups.
- IV. Dyads rather than subgroups may be used in step IV.

Commentary

Most individuals have had numerous experiences in groups of all kinds—family, religious, work, peer, sports, encounter, learning, therapy, minority, and so forth. Such experiences can provide much of the information necessary for the study of groups.

With this activity, the facilitator has an opportunity to help individuals review and understand the development of their own attitudes and behaviors in groups. In addition, the participants learn about the development of attitudes and behaviors of others. As individual participants relate their experiences with groups and their feelings about these experiences, the facilitator can help the total group see a natural, developmental order in such experiences; furthermore, the facilitator can explain that this order forms the basis for theoretical formulation, research on group behavior, and the development of group processes and practice.

In essence, the participants' current and past experiences may serve as the main source of information about groups. Resource books by experts on group theory and practice may be used for comparison and contrast with individually developed theories.

C. Self-Assessment: Focusing on Small Group Behavior

In this component, prospective counselors will have an opportunity to continue the process of self-exploration and self-assessment. Participants will be asked to complete a 25 item self-assessment inventory which focuses on their current small group behaviors. Participants will be encouraged to identify special group behavior strengths and one or two behaviors that they may wish to change. Near the end of the activity, participants will be asked to review carefully the inventory of another and write a brief profile of what he/she may be like as a small group facilitator. Positive statements and themes are encouraged. This experiential activity is from Thayer (1976, pp. 114-120).

Objectives

1. Participants will be encouraged to take an active part in their own learning about small group facilitation and assume much responsibility for their own learning and change.
2. Participants will be asked to complete a Self-Assessment Inventory and examine their small-group behavior.
3. Participants will be asked to share perceptions of their own strengths and weaknesses concerning group behavior in a positive and nonthreatening atmosphere.

Process

The process for this component is expected to take from 60 to 75 minutes. The facilitator may shorten this component by asking the participants to complete the Inventory as an out-of-class assignment.

- I. The facilitator explains the purpose of the Self-Assessment Inventory and asks the participants to complete the Inventory. (Allow thirty minutes for completion of the instrument.)

- II. The facilitator asks the participants to review the instrument and to select three items that they consider personal strengths and three items that they consider personal weaknesses.
- III. The facilitator asks the members to divide into subgroups (dyads, triads, or small groups) for a discussion. He/she encourages each group member to relate his/her three personal strengths to the group. Other group members are asked to offer feedback to the individual concerning their perceptions or impressions of his/her strengths.
- IV. The facilitator encourages each member to share with his/her group one or two personal weaknesses. The facilitator asks the group members to respond with care by offering their perceptions or impressions of the stated weaknesses.
- V. When the sharing process is completed, the groups assist each member in establishing a goal. Each member is asked to relate one behavioral change that he/she wishes to work on in other situations. This goal should have much personal value for each individual.
- VI. Near the end of the discussion process, the facilitator recommends that the groups refocus on each individual for a minute and relate a strength on which the individual can capitalize.
- VII. At this point, the participants are asked to form dyads and exchange their inventories with their dyadic partners. Each partner is asked to review the person's Inventory and write a brief 15-20 sentence profile of what this person will be like as a small-group facilitator.
- VII. After the small-group facilitator profiles are written, the participants return the inventories to their dyadic partners, reading and discussing with their partners what was gleaned from the inventories.

Variations

- I. The instrument may be completed by the participant at home and then brought to the group session for discussion.
- II. The facilitator may wish to discuss each person's strengths and weaknesses individually.
- III. The facilitator may wish to spend some time developing a group profile with which individuals can compare and contrast their own assessments of group behavior. This comparison can also prove very interesting to the facilitator if he/she compares different groups.
- IV. The statements on the inventory may be discussed one at a time in a large group or in dyads so that members can react to the statements in the presence of another person.
- V. The instrument may be used as an observation sheet for noting the interactions of a group in process or of an individual in a group. Feedback may be generated from the observers' tallies and comments on specific items.
- VI. The stimulus statements may be used as points of consideration by an individual preparing a personal analysis paper on his behavior in groups.
- VII. Participants may be asked to review the statements and to classify them into four or five different categories, such as empathy, genuineness, etc. They could be expected to give reasons for their selection of categories and their placement of items in a category.
- VIII. The instrument may be used to involve the participant in a pre and post-assessment of group behavior when skill training is provided. The facilitator could return the assessment instruments to the participants after training and a post-assessment have been completed.

- IX. The participants may ask the facilitator to review the completed instrument during a conference or they may ask him/her to write responses to each person's self-assessment.
- X. The facilitator may ask each person to rate the other participants in his/her group on selected dimensions. Each person would guess how the other people rated him/her. A computer analysis can provide interesting and helpful feedback to the participants.

SELF-ASSESSMENT INVENTORY

LOUIS THAYER

The purpose of this instrument is to help you assess your attitudes and activities during the sessions. Learning is a very personal process and, consequently, the learner should play an important role in the assessment of his own learning. An honest response to each statement may be the first step in allowing this instrument to help you reflect on your activities and learning.

Directions: Circle the number from 1 to 5 that best represents your response to each statement, based on the following:

1 means "never," "not at all."

2 means "somewhat," "sometimes," "rarely," "a little."

3 means "about as often as not," "an average amount."

4 means "usually," "a good deal," "frequently."

5 means "regularly," "practically always," "entirely."

In the space provided for comments after the scoring of each statement, try to write one or two of your perceptions on your group behavior and your attitudes as they relate to the stimulus statements. Try to clarify your own scoring.

1. I defend my ideas vehemently, disregarding the opinions of others.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 Regularly

Comments: _____

2. I encourage others to express their feelings and ideas on discussion topics.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 Regularly

Comments: _____

3. I believe that learning is my own responsibility.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 Regularly

Comments: _____

4. I respond in a genuine and honest manner to peers and the facilitator.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 Regularly

Comments: _____

5. I share personal feelings and experiences with the learning group.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 Regularly

Comments: _____

6. I respect the feelings of others.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 Regularly

Comments: _____

7. I am sensitive to the feelings of others.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 Regularly

Comments: _____

8. I recognize nonverbal cues that communicate various emotions.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 Regularly

Comments: _____

9. I offer constructive feedback when I disagree with the views of others.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 Regularly

Comments: _____

10. I defend a person who is being criticized.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 Regularly

Comments: _____

11. I expose indirect criticism when others do not recognize it.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 Regularly

Comments: _____

12. I seek feedback and clarification on the effects of my behavior, attitudes, and values.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 Regularly

Comments: _____

13. I display hostility when things don't go my way.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 Regularly

Comments: _____

14. I expect to have the last word in an exchange of views.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 Regularly

Comments: _____

15. I find it necessary to understand and to change some of my attitudes, values, and behaviors.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 Regularly

Comments: _____

16. I feel comfortable in responding to the facilitator when I am in conflict with his views or don't understand them.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 Regularly

Comments: _____

17. I set aside appropriate amounts of time to spend on projects of interest to me.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 Regularly

Comments: _____

18. I demonstrate empathy by understanding what another person is saying and I communicate what it is that I understand.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 Regularly

Comments: _____

19. I avoid conflicts or disagreements that arise in the group.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 Regularly

Comments: _____

20. I rely on others to help me establish my goals and values.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 Regularly

Comments: _____

21. I am aware of the role that I play in small-group interaction.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 Regularly

Comments: _____

22. I value the process of learning more than any specific content vehicle.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 Regularly

Comments: _____

23. I feel threatened when exercises are provided for self-assessment.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 Regularly

Comments: _____

24. I depend on others to direct my group behavior and my teaching-learning style.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 Regularly

Comments: _____

25. I prefer to be a passive learner rather than an active, participating learner.

Never 1 2 3 4 5 Regularly

Comments: _____

Profile of Potential Small-Group Facilitator: _____

Special Assignments

The facilitator assigns the following two articles for reading before the next class session. The first article is entitled "What to Look for In Groups" (Pfeiffer & Jones, 1972) and is a good, short informational article to help prospective counselors become more aware of influences and forces in a group. The second article is a chapter entitled "Can I Be Facilitative In A Group?" (Rogers, 1970) and serves to help the prospective counselor look at facilitative attitudes and behaviors for small groups. The facilitator may wish to ask participants to write a one-page reaction paper to the chapter by Rogers for discussion at the very next class session.

D. The Small Group: Becoming Aware of Interactions and the Process

This component of the module is experiential and involves the prospective counselors in participating in an unstructured small group, observing an individual in a small group, and monitoring the overall process in a small group. The experience will give the participants an opportunity to become more aware of their own behavior in a small group and receive feedback about their behavior from an observer who is observing carefully. Participants also have a chance to become aware of the behavior of others and to watch group process emerge. A key emphasis in this segment is to help participants focus or pay attention to all that is occurring in a group. When participants become more aware of group process and individuals in the process, they are more likely to be able to respond and facilitate small groups appropriately and effectively.

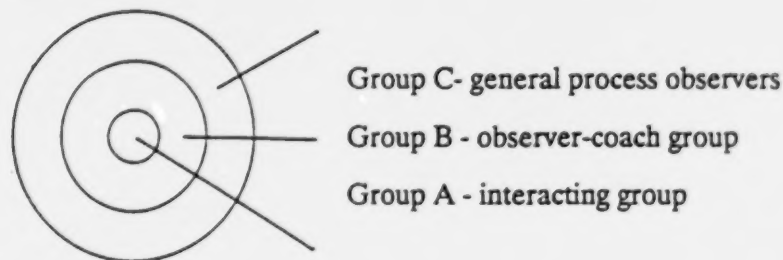
Objectives

1. Participants will have an opportunity to participate in an unstructured small group and receive feedback on their behavior.
2. Participants will be asked to observe an individual in a small group and give feedback on his or her behavior.
3. Participants will be asked to monitor the process of a small group in order to become more aware of interactions and their effects on the group process and on individuals in the group.

Process

This experiential segment may take from 1 to 3 hours depending on whether or not the facilitator has every participant experience the interacting small group. Here is a brief overview of the activity which occurs after the beginning two review steps. The format and process are a variation of an idea from Gorman (1974) which uses three groups formed in concentric circles. The inner group is the interacting group. In the middle group, each member carefully observes and takes note of a specific person's behavior in the interacting

group. After a specified amount of time, each member of the inner group has an opportunity to talk to his observer-coach for feedback and help. The process can continue after a short help session. The third group observes and notes for discussion the general processes that focus on principles of group interaction, such as leadership, facilitation, roles, norms, etc. Observation sheets (See Figures 1, 2, and 3) may be prepared in advance for use with this type of assessment format. And the activity may be used before any theory or cognitive material is presented to establish a readiness for theory.



- I. Before the main part of the process begins, the facilitator reviews the articles that were assigned for reading and reacting in Part C of the module -- "What to Look for In Groups" and "Can I Be a Facilitative Person in a Group?" If participants were asked to write reaction papers to the second article, the facilitator may wish to have the participants form a large circle and, on a strictly voluntary basis, pass their reaction papers to the left, allowing several participants to read each paper. Playing New Age music during the quiet reading time helps relax the class. After participants have read several papers, each participant returns the paper which they are reading at the moment to its author with a few positive verbal comments. Full group discussion may continue on the cognitive content of the papers and how these relate to self/career development groups.
- II. Again, the facilitator reviews briefly the core conditions for establishing a good small-group process and discusses how the basic counseling skills are applied in small groups (i.e. instead of being attentive to only one person, the

prospective facilitator needs to be attentive to an individual at one moment, and several individuals at other moments, maintaining good attentive behaviors).

- III. The facilitator introduces the activity by indicating that there will be three groups operating at the same time, each with different instructions. All participants will have an opportunity to participate in each of the three different groups. Participants are encouraged to use this complete experience for self/career development and facilitation (small-group) skills themes. Participants will have opportunities for improvement of group work/facilitation skills, observations skills, and process monitoring.
- IV. After the introduction, the facilitator divides the large group into three small groups – A, B, and C. The chairs are arranged in three concentric circles with Group A serving as the interacting group, Group B serving as the observer-coaches group, and Group C serving as the process-monitoring group. Name tags are provided for each group, especially the interacting group. Participants in Group B position themselves in such a way that each person can observe one individual in the inner circle, Group A. Group C participants sit in the outside circle in order to monitor Group A's process. Instruction sheets are provided to each group.
- V. The facilitator informs the groups that Group C will be observing Group A. Group B individuals will observe specific individuals in Group A. Group A will function as the interacting group for twenty minutes. After that amount of time, Group A individuals will meet with an observer-coach from Group B. Ten minutes will be given for the helping dyads to converse. During this ten minutes, the facilitator meets with Group C to discuss their general observations of Group A.

- VI. When the three groups are seated, the facilitator reads the instructions for the interacting group so all participants know their task. The facilitator may suggest that self/career development be the general theme.
- VII. The facilitator asks the interacting group (A) to begin. The facilitator sits outside the circles and quietly takes notes for later discussion on topical themes, conditions for group, facilitation skills, process development, who participated, what helped, what hindered the group process, what group components were absent, self-disclosure, confrontation, expression of feelings, and flight behavior.
- VIII. After twenty minutes, the facilitator calls for a pause in the interaction. Group B observer-coaches meet with the person whom they have been observing to give them feedback on group work skills and theme development. The observer-coaches are also given several ideas about giving feedback. The following ideas can be given orally or typed on the back of Group B instruction sheets.

Feedback Guidelines

- a. Focus your feedback on the person's behavior, not his/her personality.
- b. Focus your feedback in descriptions rather than judgments.
- c. Focus your feedback on a specific situation rather than on abstract behavior.
- d. Focus your behavior on the "here and now" not on the "there and then."
- e. Focus your feedback on sharing perceptions and feelings rather than on giving advice.
- f. Do not force feedback on other people.
- g. Do not give people more feedback than they can understand at the time.
- h. Focus your feedback on actions that the person can change.

(Johnson, 1990, pp. 38-39).

The facilitator meets with Group C to discuss their observations. They are encouraged not to judge what happened but to be aware of all that transpired

in the twenty minute group process. The facilitator also shares his/her observations of individuals and the group process.

- IX. After the ten minute helping session, the facilitator reconvenes the interacting group and asks the group to continue the process for another ten minutes. Groups B and C continue to observe.
- X. At this point, the facilitator may use the remaining 5-10 minutes for general discussion about group process and self/career development or have all participants write their individual reactions on their instructions sheets for review by the facilitator.
- XI. As the next session begins, Group B becomes the interacting group, Group C becomes the observer-coaches, and Group A becomes the process-monitoring group. Then, the instruction sheets are distributed and steps IV through X are repeated.
- XII. For the final session, steps IV through X are repeated as the latest Group B becomes the interacting group. Group C becomes the observer-coaches, and Group A becomes the process-monitoring group.
- XIII. The facilitator then takes whatever time is needed for effective processing of the concentric circle activity, drawing from it principles about group work and the use of group process in self/career development.

Special Assignment

The facilitator may wish to ask the prospective counselors to read the chapter on "Flight Behavior" from Egan's (1973) book, Face to Face: The Small-Group Experience and Interpersonal Growth. As discussion on group process expands, participants may also be encouraged to read the chapter "The Process of the Encounter Group" from Rogers's (1970) book Carl Rogers on Encounter Groups. These two chapters may add insights into the concentric circle activity.

Interacting Group Instructions

Interacting Group Instructions

As a member of the interacting group, you have the rather rare opportunity to write the text and then read it. The text will be the sum of interactions of your group, and your reading will be your analysis of the types of behaviors that helped and of those that hindered the formation of a group by the strangers who sat down together.

You and your group have the task of finding a task to accomplish. There are really no right and wrong ideas so yours are as good as anyone else's. The only outside requirement is that you go about the job in such a way that this collection of individuals begins to become a cohesive group.

Your name _____

Your reactions to the experience in general:

Figure 1

Observer-Coach Guide Instructions

Observer-Coach Guide Instructions

Your name _____ Observer's Name _____

You will focus on a single member of the interacting group so that you can mirror his/her behavior to him/her. Your comments will be in the form of, "As I saw you, you ..." Your behavior in the helping pair will be directed to helping him/her to think through his/her own behavior in the group.

Attempt, below, to describe your observee's behavior in the group. Was he/she quiet, domineering, helpful to others? Did he/she support and/or clarify the contributions of others? Did he/she help the group to formulate its goals?

Attempt, below, to report, as you saw it the effects of your observee's behavior on the other members of the group. Did they react, and if so what were reactions?

Figure 2

General Observer Instructions

General Observer Instructions

Your name _____ Observer's Name _____

You will focus on the interaction pattern of the whole group rather than on the behavior of a specific participant. Following the interaction session, you will have an opportunity to compare your findings with those of others in *your* group.

You will want to note who speaks most and least, who the leaders of the group appear to be, what behaviors seem to produce group action and satisfaction, what behaviors seem to block the group in getting at its task, and whether the group acts as an *entire* group, as a collection of subgroups, or as an assortment of individuals.

Make your notes below. Specific quotes of significant speeches are helpful.

Figure 3

E. Career Help Groups: Facilitating Foundations

This component will actively involve prospective counselors in various career help groups for use in educational and non-educational settings. The facilitator needs to have an appropriate set of resource materials available for the participants to use during the preparation of career help groups. Prospective counselors will design career help groups while also working in small groups. They will conclude this part of the process with presentations on their project.

Objectives

1. Participants will be asked to work in small groups and practice facilitation skills while developing a career help group.
2. Participants will be asked to design a career help group for potential use in their prospective employment setting.
3. Participants will be utilizing both self/career development information and group facilitation skills in working on this project.

Process

The facilitator will need to make plans for work on the project in one class session and presentation of the project in another class session.

- I. The facilitator will inform the participants of the "career help group" project and indicate that they will be working in small groups to accomplish the task. Each small group will have the task of creating a design for the establishment of a "career help group" to be presented at a class session in near future. Each group's presentation is to take approximately twenty minutes. Each group will be expected to turn in a written description of all the ingredients needed for the career help group.
- II. Now, the facilitator discusses some of the functions of a facilitator as he/she helps the participants prepare for the working on the project. Although these

are not all of the functions, here are some examples which may be shared (Thayer, 1984, pp. 76-77).

- being a person and a learner in the group
- creating a healthy learning climate
- identifying learner needs and talents
- selecting with learner input appropriate cognitive concepts, information, and skills along with the complementary affective components
- designing learning strategies and experiences to meet learner needs, talents, and educational prescriptions
- clarifying personal learner values through the study of subject matter, the self, and others
- helping learners discover their own curiosities and motivation to learn
- developing, locating, and having learning resources
- having trust in learners and placing responsibility in their hands
- helping learners develop communication proficiencies and learn effective, constructive means of giving and receiving feedback
- reducing threat and, consequently, stress on oneself and learners
- establishing cooperative assessment and self-assessment procedures for achievement and learning processes
- resolving conflicts through use of group processes
- developing assertive responses in learners (genuineness/congruence)
- inviting learner participation in decision-making
- extending the learning process beyond the two covers of a book and the four walls of a learning situation.

III. As the discussion continues, the facilitator asks the participants to consider a number of points concerning the development of the career help groups.

1. What will be the focus/purpose of your career help group? What tasks will be accomplished?
2. What will be the goals for the group?
3. Who will be the clientele of the group and how will they be selected? What are the guidelines for the career help group?
4. What will be the setting (e.g. educational, business) for the group?
5. What will be the role and responsibility of the facilitator?
6. What will be the time orientation (e.g. here and now, past and present, present and future)?

7. How long will the help groups run?
8. What materials/resources/people will be used in the help group?
9. How will this help group differ from therapy, counseling, or encounter groups?
10. What good referral sources will be available for participants who need or seek additional counseling processes?

IV. The facilitator notes the usefulness of intake interviews for help groups in a brief discussion (Ohlsen, Horne, & Lawe, 1988).

1. Clarify group participant's expectations.
2. Assess the participant's commitment to talk openly about career issues and concerns and to implement new behaviors.
3. Define participant's goals and ways to measure growth with reference to each goal.
4. Identify significant others whose support and reinforcement would enhance chances for success.
5. Decide how assistance can be obtained.
6. Clarify the help group's purpose, format, and resources.

Although intake interviews take time, they are most helpful for facilitators and participants in clarifying expectations, goals, and commitment to a group learning process.

V. At this point, the facilitator divides the class into task groups of 5 to 6 members each. Each group will have the task of creating the design for a "career help group" with resources and give a general twenty minute presentation to the class on the goals, format, and resources.

Here are several suggested topical career help groups for consideration:

Vocational Exploration Group
Mid-life Career Change Group

Career Interest/Development Group
Self/Career Growth Group
Job Placement Group
Dual Career Marriage Group
Preretirement Counseling Group

VI. At a subsequent meeting, the task groups give their presentations to the class.

Comments on the Process

The facilitator may wish to use the chapter, "Vocational Development Groups," by (Vander Kolk, 1985) as a resource for this component of the module. When the facilitator divides the class into small task groups, he/she may ask the groups to ask certain group members to serve as group process facilitators to give them experience in facilitation. The facilitator may monitor this facilitation and give feedback to the different facilitators.

Additional activities may be planned which utilize small group process sessions and career development information (Brooks, 1976; Liu, 1976; & Thayer, 1976).

The facilitator may also wish to invite a speaker to class to talk about career help groups or arrange for a telelecture with the telephone with a special resource person who runs career counseling/help groups.

The module facilitator may wish to speak a bit about key sections of books that would provide good resources for the prospective counselors as they approach their task of developing "career help groups" (i.e. the three chapters on "Challenging Clients" from the book by Ohlsen, Horne, & Lawe, 1988).

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